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Can We Repair The World?

By Olga Fendrich Winkler

Dedicated to the memory of my son, who was one of the most compassionate and tolerant individuals to the human race.

Dennis Owen Winkler

1949-1997

Hope there will be no need for a book like this in the future.

Olga Winkler

Prologue

I lived through a time when Jews were discriminated against and slaughtered simply because they were Jews.

The story of my life in Hungary and my escape from Europe to America can give young people of today a window through which to witness that time period. Many years have passed since then, yet, as I look at the world around me I see signs and omens of a similar nature beginning again.

As you mature there will be many choices and many experiences in your world. You will hear many different opinions by people and it is my hope that you will exercise your beliefs and good judgment so that you can bear the fruits of who you will become tomorrow.

I hope that through reading my story others will seize the occasion to stop discrimination and hatred of others before the world is inflamed in another holocaust or ethnic cleansing.

The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse – Famine, Death, Pestilence and War – the fifth Horseman is Man. Man is the most deadly and dangerous of all.

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"The Nazi Era" 1933-1946

A Chronology of Key Events

1933

January 30: German President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor (prime minister) of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party.

March 23: Dachau (pronounced *DA-how*), the first concentration camp is established

March 28: Nazis proclaim a general boycott of all Jewish-owned businesses.

Apri 7: Jews are dismissed from Jewish civil servants, including university professors and schoolteachers, are fired in Germany. Similar laws in the following weeks affect Jewish lawyers, judges, and doctors.

April 26: Formation of the Gestapo (the secret state police).

May 5: Hitler proposes "eugenic laws to ban Jewish & Aryan marriages & begins sterilizations.

May 10: Thousands of students in Berlin gather to burn books written by Jews and by opponents of Nazism.

August 29: Officially confirmed that the Nazis are sending Jews to concentration camps.

1934

August 2: German President Hindenburg dies. Hitler becomes *Führer,* the head of the state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

1935

June-August: "Juden Verboten" ("No Jews") appears on signs in restaurants and stores all over Germany.

September 15: The Nazi regime decrees anti-Semitic "Nuremberg Laws," declaring that those of "impure blood," such as Jews, are no longer citizens of the state. These decrees were intended to isolate the Jews socially as well as politically.

1937

August 1: A new concentration camp, Buchenwald, is opened.

1938

July 6: World leaders meet in Evian, France to consider providing refuge for German and Austrian Jews. The conference fails.

November 7: Herschel Grynszpan, a Polish-Jewish youth whose parents were expelled from Germany to Poland, assassinates Ernst vom Rath, Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris.

November 9: The Nazis use the assassination as a pretext for widespread anti-Semitic programs throughout the Reich which became known as "Kristallnacht" (night of broken glass).

November 9-10 (Kristallnacht): Anti-Semitic riots in Germany and Austria bring about the murder of Jews, the desecration and the destruction of synagogues, and the looting of Jewish-owned stores.

November 15: Jewish children are expelled from German schools.

December 13: The Nazis decree the compulsory confiscation ("Aryanization") of Jewish industries, businesses, and shops.

1939

September 1: German army invades Poland, sparking the beginning of World War II.

September 3: Britain and France declare war on Germany.

October 12: Jews from Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia are deported to concentration camps in Poland.

November 23: Wearing of the identifying *Judenstern* (the six-pointed Star of David) is mad compulsory for Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Poland. Similar decrees in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe follow.

1940

March 29: Himler orders the construction of a concentration camp at Auschwitz.

April 9-May 10: Germans invade Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France

April 30: German authorities order the first major Jewish ghetto in Lodz, Poland, which had been established in February, 1940, to be sealed off. Eventually, at least 160,000 people were confined in the ghetto and could not leave without German authorization.

October: The Warsaw ghetto is established. On November 15, 1940 it is sealed off. It was the largest ghetto in both area and population, with more than 350,000 Jews at its peak occupancy. Jews are limited to 183 calories per day. Between January and August, 1941 about 13,000 Jews die of hunger in the ghetto. In one month alone, March of 1942, almost 5,000 died of starvation.

November 20: Hungary joins the Axis

1941

June 22: Germans attack the Soviet Union.

September 23: First experiments with lethal gassing are conducted at Auschwitz.

October 14: Deportation of Jews from Germany begins

October 23: Massacre of Jews in Odessa by the Einstzgruppen (special mobile death squads in the rear guard of the German army) as it advanced in the Soviet Union. Other massacres by the Einstzgruppen follow.

December 8: Chelmno death camp, on the Ner River in Poland is opened.

December 11: Hitler and Mussolini declare war on the United States.

1942

January 20: Wansee conference convened by the Nazis near Berlin to implement the "final solution to the question" – the annihilation of all Jews in Europe.

January 21: Jewish resistance organization is consolidated in Vilna ghetto, adding to the growing number of resistance groups in Eastern Europe.

March 26: The Nazis begin deportation of Jews to Auschwitz.

June 1: Treblinka death camp opens.

September 2: German SS troops "clear" the Jewish Ghetto of Warsaw of 50.000 people.

October 17: Allied nations pledge to punish Germans after the war for their policy or genocide.

1943

January 18: Jews in the Warsaw ghetto launch an uprising against the Nazis. Street fighting lasts four days. Uprisings and revolts in other ghettos and in the camps follow.

February 2: German Sixth Army surrenders at St[illegible]ngrad, marking the turning point in the war.

May 16: Nazi liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto.

June 11: Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS, orders liquidation of all Polish-Jewish ghettos.

June 19: Goebbels declares Berlin "free of Jews:

September 2: Inmates of Poland's concentration camp used for "medical" experiments

1944

April 5: The Germans begin deporting Hungarian Jews.

May 15-June 8: Some 476, 000 Jews are deported from Hungary to Auschwitz.

June 6 (D-Day): Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Western Europe begins in Normandy, France.

July 24: Soviet troops liberate Maidenek death camp.

November 24: Himmler orders the destruction of Auschwitz crematoria as the Nazis try to hide evidence of the death camps.

1945

January 27: The Red Army takes Auschwitz.

February 4-11 Yalta conference convened by Allied leaders in the Crimea (Soviet Union) to discuss plans for postwar Europe.

March 5: American troops reach Germany

April 11: American troops liberate Buchenwald death camp.

April 15: Allied troops liberate Bergen-Belsen death camp

April 25: American and Soviet troops meet at the Elbe River

April 30: United States troops liberate Dachau.

April 30: Hitler commits suicide

May 7: Germany surrenders unconditionally. End of war in Europe

November 22 – October 1, 1946: Nuremberg War Crime Tribunal tires and punishes those who had planned or waged aggressive war or acted criminally against civilians. Eleven defendants are sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, four to various prison terms, and three are acquitted.

By the Order of Hitler

Beginning in 1939, patches had to be worn on the clothing and prisoner uniforms of the following groups of people.

- Jews
- Jewish Prisoners
- Political Prisoners
- Gypsies
- Homosexuals
- Criminals
- Asocial (mentally ill, vagrants)

Background Information of Hungary

- In 1925 there were 490,000 Jews in Hungary. At the beginning of the War there were approximately 800,000 Jews including refugees from neighboring countries.

- In 1938 Hungary joined Germany in dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, gaining sections of Slovakia. In 1939 Hungary occupied Sub Carpathian Russia, and in 1940, northern Transylvania.

- Randolph L. Braham, noted historian, said that the Jewish population of this enlarged Hungary nearly doubled in size in 1941, counted 725,005 Jews or 4.91 percent of the total population. Of these 324,026 lived in territories acquired between 1938 and 1941.

- In 1942 during the Wannsee conference, Hitler said, "Get the Jews." Up to that time, Hungarian Jews were relatively safe with the exception of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Group (Hungarian Nazi Party) activities.

- Admiral Miklos Horthy and his prime minister, Miklos Kallay, refused to deport Hungarian Jews, but 63,000 Jews died or were killed before the Germans invaded. After the invasion Hungarian officials were in fact involved in the deportations. It was said that Hungarian officials took the initiative rather than just carry out orders given by the 100 to 140 German officials sent to Hungary by Adolph Eichmann, as they needed the help of the Hungarians.

- The deportation of the Jews began in May 1944 and the last train from Sátoraljaújhely arrived in Auschwitz in June 1944

- The Final Solution was engineered by Adolph Eichmann with the help of the Arrow Cross and the local gendarmes of Zemplén County. This job of eliminating the Hungarian Jews became the most important endeavor, even over the job of saving Germany.

- In 1944, Horthy tried to pull out of the axis alliance as the soviet forces reached Hungary. Horthy was thrown out by the Germans and the leader of the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross movement caused chaos and many Jews were killed by gangs of the Arrow Cross group.

- By 1944, Hitler knew that Germany lost the War, and much of the Army in the Eastern Front was retreating. Hitler wanted total annihilation of all the 11,000,000 Jews in Europe.

- When the Soviets liberated Budapest in early 1945, about seventy percent, 502,000, had been deported, murdered or died under German occupation. 440,000 had been departed to Auschwitz-Birkenau. At the end of 1945, 255-500 Jews remained in Hungary, of that 144,000 in Budapest.

Map of Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps
from: Arno Mayer, Why did the Heavens not Darken? The "Final Solution in History (New York: Pantheon, 1988), xvii.

Zemplén County
Tornanádaska
Tornyosnémeti
Sátoraljaújhely
Rudabánya
Bánréve
Putnok
Edelény
Encs
Pácin
Sárospatak
Ózd
Kazincbarcika
Sajószentpéter
Szikszó
Szerencs
Miskolc
Tokaj
Tiszaújváros
Mezőkövesd
Mezőcsát
27
3
26
25
E71
37
38
35

Hungary
Győr
Esztergom
Ózd
Miskolc
Sárospatak
Eger
MÁTRA
1015
Gyöngyös
Tatabánya
Pápa
Szombathely
Vasvár
Veszprém
Keszthely
Hegyeszeg
Székesfehérvár
BUDAPEST
Jászberény
Szolnok
Cegléd
Kecskemét
Dunaújváros
Nyíregyháza
Debrecen
Püspökladány
Balatonkeresztúr
Nagykanizsa
Tamási
Kaposvár
Komló
Pécs
Barcs
Szekszárd
Kiskunhalas
Szentes
Békéscsaba
Gyula
Hódmezővásárhely
Szeged
Baja
Mohács
Subotica
Mako

Why Be Jewish?

By Mark Twain

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

- Mark Twain

Harpers 1898

Letter to My Grandchildren And Children Everywhere

I owe my life to my parents not only for my birth but because of their love for their children and mostly my mother's foresight in urging my father to appeal to relatives in the United States in the 1930s to help us leave Hungary.

In 1933, Hitler was appointed as Reich Chancellor (prime minister) of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party. From that time on, as a child I was told by other children in school, "You don't belong here!" and "Why don't you leave?" Miraculously, by 1940, my family and I had left Hungary. We left in stages. My father left first in 1938. My mother and brother, Michael, left in 1939. My sister Elizabeth, age 15; Olga (me), age 13; my brother Theodore, age 9; and my sister Gabrielle, age 5 left in 1940.

The biblical tradition is that man does not live by bread alone, nor does he live alone at all. For this democratic tradition, I ask my grandchildren and the children of America to see that it remains a free country for all people.

I can only leave you what I know, what I learned in my lifetime: respect for family, for learning, and compassion for the human race. I would like to add some four letter words that I am copying from a long admired man. They spoke to me. I hope these words will also speak to my grandchildren and others and that they will use them with each other as well. The words are "help," "give," "care," "feel," and "love."

To the 30 million human beings and the 6 million Jewish people who died in the Holocaust because of man's inhumanity to man, I ask that you, the next generation, must see that it never happens again to any group of people.

I leave to each of my grandchildren, the shared memories that you had with me. I know what each of you has meant to me and I know what good people you are. I would have liked to live to see whether your generation can bring peace and tranquility to the World which mine did not.

There are no words of gold from me other than that I love my grandchildren and hope you find your way in life and become happy, productive people, in your choices in life.

The Good Years – A Journey to the Past

As I grow older with each year, some of my early childhood memories become more and more vivid. One of my first recollections is the birth of my brother Theodore who is four years younger than I am.

We lived in a three-level house. The first floor had an entrance to the street where my mother had her dressmaking shop. She created beautiful clothes for the wives of leaders in the community. The second and third levels were our living quarters.

The recollection is the screech of a baby crying and my father trying to explain the sound. He tried to keep my older sister Elizabeth, my brother Michael, and I occupied while the midwife tended to my mother. In those days, most children were born at home with a midwife present, so we were able to see my new brother Theodore very soon after his birth.

We had two entrances to our house. The first was the entrance to my mother's salon. The other was a large, black iron gate. As you stepped through the gate, you saw beautiful gardens with flowers. My father was so fond of flowers and so good in their care. He would prune the roses and water them with rain water he collected in old wooden wine barrels that sat under the drain pipes. According to my father, the rain water was much better for the flowers than water from a tap.

Around the perimeter of this enclosure was a circle of five residences. One was a middle-aged Jewish woman who was a tin-maker. She made pots, baking sheets, and large spoons. She was called a "spinster" as she never married and had no family. She gave me and the other children in my family pennies at Chanukah (a Jewish holiday around Christmas time). Our home was the only one of the residences that had children.

The next residence was occupied by a bachelor physician and on occasion would tend to us children when needed, but he was not our doctor because we had national health insurance. He was very tolerant of us children; accept for Theodore as he was a mischievous and curious little boy. The doctor also liked to experiment with plants when he had spare time. Somehow, Theodore always got into his experiments and raised havoc.

Next to the doctor lived a couple. I never really knew what they did, but the husband liked to draw and paint. As I think back today, they were in mid-life and had no children. They did not spend much time at home. They did, however, have a cook who was a jolly, roly-poly, short woman who was always singing and baking. I think that she ate a lot of the things she baked, but she always called me into the kitchen and gave me some cookies.

In the middle of the afternoon, on a dark, cold day I was out in the yard alone. It looked as if it would

start snowing any minute. I heard Agi, the cook, call my name and say "what are you doing out there all by yourself?" I think I said, "I am bored." She said "Come on in!" With that said I jumped up and went into the kitchen in the back of the house.

It felt so good to be in that warm kitchen with the wonderful aromas of her cooking. Of course, they were not Jewish and I was worried that she might give me something to eat that I was not allowed to have. She handed me some cookies to chew on when a door opened and in walked the husband of the couple. He turned to me and said, "What a nasty day. It's going to snow – but, good soon." I was a little frightened of him since I hardly ever saw him. He asked if I would like to go to the parlor where he and his wife liked to sit. I said yes.

His wife was sitting on a grey, shiny, beautiful sofa and asked if I like the cookies that I had in my hand. She said, "We like everything Agi makes." She asked if I would like to sit and visit awhile. I said yes. She and I conversed while her husband sat at a small table with paper and pen or crayons (I don't remember which). I was ready to leave when the husband handed me the sheet that he was drawing on and asked if I would like to have it. I took the sheet, thanked him, and left.

When I went outside, it was snowing. I did not look at the paper until I got home. I never forgot that drawing. It was beautiful, but very sad. The picture was a snowy day, like it really was – the ground full of snow and still coming down. A child bent forward against the snow like she was lost, with nowhere to go, and no one would ever find her.

Our last neighbor was the closest to our house. They were an elderly couple. They did not go out to much and were not friendly to any of the neighbors. That was alright with me because I did not like them too much. I always felt they did not like children too much and they had none of their own.

The couple had cages close to their house. In the cages were bunnies. Early on, I once went up to the cages to look in and the couple came out and said "They are not toys! Don't bother them." I did not understand what they meant. I went home and asked my mother what the couple meant. My mother had a hard time explaining to me that they slaughtered the rabbits and ate them. I never went near the cages again. I did not want to get to know them and then one day look in the cage and see that some of the bunnies were missing.

My mother had another baby at this address – a little girl by the name of Gabrielle. We received her with open arms – the four of us were a little older by then, and it was fun having a little sister. I remember a beautiful sunny, but very cold day with snow on the ground. I asked my mother if I could take Gabrielle out in the buggy for a little stroll around the yard. My mother said yes, only if my sister Elizabeth went with me. She was the oldest sibling.

I said "great!" So out we went pushing the buggy, rocking it and having a good time. We hit a small snow bank and as we maneuvered the carriage, turned it over and out went the baby. Elizabeth and I bent down to inspect Gabrielle. Thank goodness the baby fell on the heavy blankets and she was fine.

We did tell mother when we came in since my brother Theodore saw us through the window and he certainly would have tattled. So we knew we better tell our mother before he had a chance to do it!

Many evenings as we would be doing homework, playing games, or talking, I would glance over to where my parents would be listening to a news broadcast or talking. I could see the concern on their faces. My mother's dressmaking business was decreasing because non-Jews were not allowed to go to Jewish people for services anymore. My mother had to let go most of the young women who helped her in making the clothing. My father was in the wine business with his cousins, and that business was failing as well.

Less and less money was coming in and we were harassed more and more. We were told more and more by neighbors and just passersby, "It's time to leave this city, you dirty Jews! Hitler is coming! You don't belong here!" Our family had lived for generations in Hungary.

It became increasingly dangerous to be on the streets by day or night. We moved to another location in town because of the financial burden and my parents thought it would be safer to be away from the mainstream of the city.

Where we moved to was not much better, and maybe even worse. We started to hear about Jewish people being burned out of their homes; people disappearing never be found. W children no longer could attend school because of the harassment by the other students as well as snide remarks by some of the teachers.

Is this what the world is heading towards today? Hate your neighbor because they practice a different religion or are a different color or come from a foreign country? If people come into the United States legally, they are welcome. We were so happy to be able to be called Americans. We all learned English fast, respected the laws, and became good citizens of the United States.

We cannot sit back and allow this hatred and intolerance for each other because of our differences. Hate spreads like wild fire. We must, each of us, work to stop intolerance of others.

Early Memories – My Happier Moments

The Candy Store

I am about four years old and my father gave me a filler (penny) to spend any way I wanted to. I remember that around the corner we have a little grocery store that I have visited before. As I walk along, clutching my money, I am thinking ahead what can I get today?

I open the glass pane door. A bell chines like a cowbell to alert the owner that there is a customer. It is a large store with wood floors, not polished but sort of gray looking, and shelving is in the back halls with lots of burlap bags stacked on the floor with scoops. I had to stand on my toes to see that the bags had rice, sugar, flour, and beans in them.

As I am circling around the store, I hear the owner's wife say to me (Jó napot kislány) "Good day, little girl." I turned and nodded my head and continued to look at everything even though I knew that my little money wouldn't buy me much. I pretty well knew what my purchase would be before I entered the store.

I walk up to the glass case where the jars of candy are displayed. I look at each jar and after much thought, I point and loudly ask the lady behind the counter to give me a penny's worth of the rock candy. She hands me a little bag and I say (Köszönöm) "Thank you."

I walk out clutching the little bag to make sure that the candy is still there, I reach in and take a chunk out, hold it up to the light and pretend it is diamonds, lick it, put it back in the little brown bag and continue to my house. At home, I take the candy out of the bag, lined it all up and one-by-one, crunch them up with my teeth until they are all gone. These cherished memories of childhood were disrupted in my teen years as the borders all over Europe were said to be closed. The Second World War started and Jews would not be able to leave their countries.

Mountain Climbing

*I*t is early fall on a very foggy day. My sister, Elizabeth, gets an idea to go up the mountains and try to look down onto our little city to see what it looked like with fog covering it. She is ten and I am seven years old.

The city was located in a valley with mountains around it. They really were not very high, which I did not realize until I returned after the War. We trudged up, huffing and puffing. It was slippery and damp because of the fog. Finally, we reach the top out of breath. I turn to look below and what I see is white clouds covering the city. My sister nags me and says, "No, this is not a good spot. Let's go to the next peak." That one was not much better.

We went from peak to peak. As we stop at one point, there are white puffs rolling up and there is the city below. The clouds are beautiful with light and dark shadows, but by this time I am cold and damp and ready to start going down. I began going and my sister had no choice but to follow. When we got down I asked her, "Was it worth it?" And we both nodded our heads at the same time, "Yes!" I reminded her that in the summer months as a family we climbed this mountain and as we reached the top the Tavern, to which our dad sold wine, waited for us and would shower us with soft drinks, pretzels, and peanuts. This sustained us to hike down- but most often I did not walk but sat on the pine needles and slid down. How much fun before the sad days came?

The Blue Dress

I envision light streaming into the room from the two windows, highlighting the large chiffonier which held the beautiful clothes my mother had made for us including my favorite blue dress.

I must have been seven or eight years old and as usual in the spring and fall for the Holy Days, my mother would sew new dresses for my sisters and me. My mother used to have yards and yards of beautiful fabric that she would purchase for her clients and sometimes for her own use. I don't know how she picked out the material for this particular dress she made me that year but it was my favorite dress for all time.

The fabric was lightweight, sky-blue wool crepe with a beautiful texture. The skirt was pleated and the top of the dress had short sleeves with white cuffs and a white pique collar. On the bodice she had hand embroidered white polka dots. To this day I have never seen a more beautiful dress.

My mother's life was the one that was most drastically changed because of the interruption of the War. She was an extremely talented designer. As the shadow of anti-Semitism peeked its head out, the many women who loved her creations could not continue to enjoy her wonderful designs that she created for each individual client because they were in danger by associating with a Jew.

I always felt so sad for my mother because she lost the most by leaving the country of her birth. Her love for creating beautiful clothing was interrupted by the war.

My Grandmother and the Apple Tree

*I*n some respect I lived my early life in a very unusual place. It was a boarder city. Hungary has two bodies of water. One is famous and extensive called the Danube, and the other is called Tisa, which is much smaller and narrow in width. Most people have not even heard of it unless they live in Hungary or Slovakia because one side is Hungary and the other Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia).

After the First World War one side of the land behind the Tisa became Slovakia and two of my mother's brothers ended up living there and she remained in Hungary. The Tisa was a very slowly moving body of water and I remember my father carrying me on his back as he was swimming in the Tisa. Those are some good memories of those days. The waterfront was well known by residents of the city who visited doctors' offices and stores on the tree-lined street nearby. My grandmother's doctor was located in on this street. I spent a good deal of time with my grandmother. She was short, stocky though not heavy. She had a pretty face that was small and round, medium complexion, and white hair. You seldom saw her hair because it was usually covered with a lace shawl. She wore the appropriate color depending on where she was going but it was always black or white; the white was for going to the synagogue. She always dressed in long, dark skirts, usually a white blouse, and her shawl.

My grandmother often picked me up after school. At this time, I was about six years old. One day, as we left the school yard, she said, "I have your favorite lunch today," which was beans with some meat and tomato sauce. We would sit outside on the stoop - the steps where she knew I loved to sit and eat. I knew that she also had something else on her mind that day. She had a smile on her face. She squinted her eyes and asked me if I would like to go to the doctor's office with her. She knew that I liked going by the tree-lined street with the Tisa behind us and a few apple trees along the walk with benches to sit on.

Grandma was asking me how school was and trying to make conversation – as grandmas do. She knew me well and she was very observant and she saw I did not want to talk about school. I wanted her to reach up to the apple tree and pluck an apple or two for me with her cane. As I said she was short so she stood up and was readying herself to get up on the bench. This scared me, seeing her get up on the bench, but she did it and she had her cane in her hand to swing at the apples. A few ended up in the Tisa but I did get an apple out of her bravery. I loved my grandmother very much but as the hate toward Jews grew more and more as time went by I was glad that she never got to see how bad the people of her wonderful city turned into after her death.

My Best Friend and I

We Are All Different But the Same

I can so well remember her this spring day. The sun was shining with a gold haze. The trees were in early bloom and I was on my way to school.

I was in the fourth grade. The school was a ten minuted walk from my house. As I got close to the school yard, I could see students standing around in clusters talking, almost in whispers. As I drew closer I did not see any of my Jewish friends in these groups but as I looked around, I did see a few Jewish students entering the building.

I had Jewish and non-Jewish girlfriends but I had a very special friend, Eva, who was Catholic. We spent a lot of time together outside of class as well as at school. In the winter we would play outside of our house - sledding down a hill from our house and throwing snowballs back and forth. Sometimes my brothers would join in or come out to tease us.

In the summer months, when time permitted, we would walk down to the center of town, look into the shop windows or just sit on a bench and watch people and talk about the many things girls talk about.

This particular day seemed strange. The teacher as well as the whole class seemed quieter than usual. I began to have a sense of fear. I knew that my parents had been listening to the news from Germany and my mother told my father we must urge our relatives that we have in America to help us leave Hungary. The news that was broadcast each day from Germany about the Jews and the anti-Semitic stories coming from there were increasing in number and severity.

I could hardly wait for the school day to be over so I could walk home as usually with my friend Eva. Eva came from a religious Catholic family and each day as we came to the Catholic Church on the main street, she would go in and I would wait for her outside. But this day, as we met after school, I could tell that there was something different and she had some serious things on her mind.

She was a very pretty girl with a light complexion and blondish hair. She was a little frail looking and we used to kid her that the wind would blow her away. I, on the other hand, was a true red-head, with a ruddy complexion, and the wind could not blow me away!

Eva was very quiet this day on our way home. I did not want to start the discussion because I felt that it would be better for her to tell me what was going on rather than me asking. As young as I was, I knew for some years now that Jews were not liked in my city or in many other places either. I could not comprehend why we were picked on and called "dirty Jews" or told to leave the city.

Finally, Eva and I are sitting on a bench in the main area of the city facing each other as we usually did on our way home from school. Today, her eyes do not look into my eyes. She keeps looking away, turning her head back and forth as she burst out, "I can't see you anymore!" For a minute, I think that she is about to cry. Her voice breaks in as she takes a breath.

I sat there frozen. What does she mean? We can't see each other, play, talk, or walk together? What have I done? I asked, "Did I do something to you?" She replied in a hoarse voice with a tear in her eye – not letting it drop down her face. She said, "Don't you understand? You are a Jew and my parents don't want me to associate with you anymore. And the kids in school have been saying to me if I continue to be friends with you, I can't be friends with them."

The parting was very sad. Neither of us knew what to do or say. Did we hug or just turn and walk away? We joined our hands as we both reached out and said goodbye forever.

I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall to hear how her parents spoke about us Jews at home. They were always nice and polite to me when I visited with Eva.

I turned up towards the hills to my house; walking slowly. I did not want to get home too soon and have to share my feelings of a lost friendship that I had had for years. And here I am writing about it and it happened sixty some years ago. Does one ever get over it?

After a sleepless night, I dressed and got ready for school. I told my parents that I was fine and started off. All along the way to school, I told myself that all will be well since my parents told me that I won't have to go to that school much longer because Jewish children were not welcomed. Also, very soon, we would be leaving the city for good.

As I reflect on that fateful day, I mostly feel a sadness for Eva that she had to obey her family and the societal pressure to choose. I hope that as an adult she was free to make her own choices.

We must guard against ignorance like this so that it never happens again. We are all the same under our skin; we all feel pain as human beings.

The Big Secret

I am ten years old; my brother Michael is a year and a half older than I am. He attended a different school than I did. One day we were walking on the main street in our city and my brother sees a classmate of his walking towards us, we stop and introductions are made and we walk together towards our homes. As we near the friend's apartment building he asked us if he could come to our house after school some day. Both Michael and I answer at the same time "Yes, do come."

A few days later he came to our house with Michael. We went out to our yard to play ball. He was a very polite, good humored person with an olive complexion dark hair kind of slender and taller than Michael and I. He had no father. He was an only child living with his mother.

We had a great time together and we started to play together many afternoons after school hours for as long as we were able to attend school. In the summer months it was playing ball, hop scotch, or just sitting under a shady tree telling stories and talking about school experiences. In the winter we would ice skate, ride our sled down the middle of the street since no cars came up that way or any where besides the main street. We could play in the street without worry of cars coming along.

After being friends for quite some time, Gyuri said, "I am tired. Let's go sit under that big tree with its branches hanging down to shade us. As we are sitting under the tree Gyuri is fidgeting, which is not like him. He said, "I have a secret to share with you two but you can't tell anyone." Michael and I exchanged glances and I said to myself maybe he had a fight with another friend or his mother did not approve of something he did.

Michael and I sat there waiting. I could tell that Gyuri was not sure should he share his secret. Finally he said, "You sure you won't tell anyone?" I said, "Cross my heart."

Gyuri said, "Well, you know how awful it has been with the children in school calling us Jews and telling us to leave this city and country, that we don't belong here, and that Hiller is coming soon. We can't go to school anymore and we have to be cooped up in the house all the time."

Gyuri went on to say that he and his mother are leaving for America in a very short time and they were afraid and did not want anyone to find out.

The day before they were to leave Gyuri came over to our house and gave me a small photograph of himself which I tucked behind the chiffonier. Saying goodbye was difficult. I walked him to his house, and then he walked me back to my house. We must have walked back and forth three or four times. Finally we said goodbye. To my sorrow I never ever knew what happened to them. I hope that he and his mother reached America safely and had a good life.

Can you believe the picture that I treasured and hid so well was lost to me since we left in the middle of the night soon after they did? In my haste I forgot to take the picture from its hiding place to take it with me.

Escape at Midnight "Children in Flight"

It was past midnight on a cool September night. My mother awakened us and asked us to put on the layers of the clothes that were laid out by her when we were asleep. Small suitcases were waiting by the door for the five children; each packed with the bare necessities. As a child, it was difficult to understand why we had to leave. We stood there with our small suitcases. My mother had gathered a few of her treasures: a candlestick, a shawl of her mother's, and a few photographs.

As we walked to the door of our house and stepped outside, it was pitch black. I could not look up to see the stars in the sky as I usually did. I was in a trance standing next to my mother as she locked the door. I had no idea what she did with the key. A feeling of sadness came over me knowing that this was forever and I would never again live in this house. This moment, I knew, could not be erased from my memory.

We walked along a very dark, narrow road lined with trees on both sides of the road. The tree tops almost touch and a slight breeze was blowing. Gabrielle, the youngest was finding it difficult to keep up with the other older children so we took turns carrying her to the train station that would take us from the city of our and our ancestors' birth.

The walk seemed so far away yet we knew that the distance was short. As we arrived at the train station we huddled in a corner where the lights were dim in order to not attract attention. There were few people in the station. It seemed like an endless wait until the train arrived. We tried to act nonchalant as we boarded the train with the other waiting passengers. I do not remember much about the train ride except that it was long and I was very tired but was afraid to fall asleep. I feared that if I drifted off that somehow the family might leave me behind.

While I struggled to stay awake my mind wandered to our home full of our treasured belongings. We could not sell anything because our neighbors would know that we were preparing to leave. The memory has haunted me for years. Who would live in our house? Do we know them? Who would sit in the chaise lounge in the large room where we gathered on cold nights, warming ourselves by the ceramic stove, telling stories? Our city seemed to be the central point for extreme anti-Semitism by 1938. A large group was formed by the name of the Arrow Cross was creating chaos throughout our city. This was the city where most of the Jews from Hungary were put on cattle trains and sent to Auschwitz to be killed. What a legacy!

Our Surrogate Parents

My father was in America for almost one year before he could secure two America visas which were very difficult to obtain at that time. He really needed five visas for the four children and my mother. This was very difficult to accomplish at this time of such turmoil on the European front.

My father could only get two visas. My mother walked the floor back and forth agonizing what to do. She knew that the Arrow Cross group was getting stronger in harassing the Jews and we had little choice but leave the city as soon as possible. Finally, mother decided that she and my brother Mike would leave for America. When she reached the USA she could appeal to the officials to bring the four remaining children out sooner than if she sent two children alone. Also Michael might be taken to a labor camp since they were taking boys his age.

With the danger of daily round-up my mother knew that all of us had to leave our city. Though she had a brother with family in the city as well as other relations, she contacted her sister Ettuska, and her husband uncle Moritz, in the small city of Pilis, which was an hour outside of Budapest.

For the remainder of our stay in Hungary we moved in with our aunt and uncle for nine months. The crowded little house was on the same property as the Synagogue in which my uncle had been the Rabbi and Cantor for the past fifteen years. The Synagogue had been looted by the locals so we carried articles of religious pieces into the small cramped house. The wood from the seats was used to board up the windows of the house leaving us in semi darkness during the day.

There was one bedroom, a large kitchen and a large day room which became a bedroom at night. Sometimes I would wake to see the sun rays coming through the openings between the boards which covered the windows. The rooms felt cold and damp and as the sun rays peaked through the slits in the boards I would imagine that it was warming the room. In my imagination it was nice and warm outside, I could laugh, I could go out breathe the fresh air, attend school, see friends, and of course it was all fantasy. As I return to the reality of the situation and dried my eyes I tried to continue to hope that one day we would be able to escape from here.

My aunt was a warm, comforting, strong woman with a nice pink complexion and dark hair pulled back from her face into a bun. Most of the time she was in good humor but at times I would see her face very subdued staring into space as she stood in the kitchen getting ready to prepare our next meal. Each meal became less and less as we had little food left. My uncle would go out at night to his congregants asking for help. The kosher butcher was only allowed to sell at odd hours and had little to sell even if one had money which my aunt and uncle did not as

there were no services and the Synagogue was closed. The congregants of the Synagogue were in a similar situation, also living in boarded up homes unable to work and had little to share with my uncle. When able they would share some of their meager food supplies with us.

My aunt and uncle tried to make the Sabbath different from the week days to bring a little lighter mood, to laugh, to share family stories and sometimes have some special food that my aunt had saved for Sabbath.

The children would select something different to wear for the Sabbath evening meal. We would first help my aunt bring in the copper bathtub, heat water and each of us would take our turn and bathe, dress and look forward to the evening. My aunt would set the table with her best white lace tablecloth, dishes, silverware and her beautiful candelabra. Before the meal my aunt with a white lace shawl on her head would light the candles, say her prayers, and bless the children. She sometime would say, "We hope for better times and hope your parents will be able to get you to safety soon."

I could see my uncle look at his wife and their eyes meet in understanding. Their thoughts may have been of fear, hopelessness and of what is ahead for all of us. In addition, their sense of responsibility to their children and the four of us who need to be cared for and protected for who knows for how long must have preyed on their minds.

As I reflect back to the months that I spent with my aunt and uncle I remember the harmony that this couple shared together. He was a quiet man of medium stature, straight shoulders, with a small moustache, a little goatee, a warm smile on his face most of the time. He read to us. Helped with some lessons but I would see the sadness on his face at times as we would hear someone knocking on the windows as they passed by the house. Everyone in this little town knows where a Jew lives. My uncle would look up from his reading in the boarded up room but he had not been reading. He is deep in thought, most likely, missing his work with his congregants. Each day is more and more difficult to get food on the table and hope is fading…how long can we hold out and be closed up like this.

Relief for us came after almost nine long months. A telegram arrives and is slipped under our door. Four visas are waiting for us at the American Consulate in Budapest. Elizabeth and I go to the American Consulate and are told all documents have been forwarded to the Cunard Lines with whom my father and mother dealt with previously for their exiting. The agent at the Cunard Line informs us that they have stopped sailing all their ships for the duration of the war. My sister and I look at each other and say, "Not another road block. Will it never end?"

The agent did inform us that very few ships are leaving for America from any country in Europe. He knows of one that he might be able to get us on which is leaving in one week in

Genoa, Italy. They make arrangements for us and we leave elated with the news. We arrive in Pilis with the good news that we are leaving in a week and find out that Theodore is very ill with Scarlet Fever. My uncle during the evening hours went for the Jewish doctor to come and see my brother. The doctor came at midnight and told us that things are becoming very dangerous in the city for Jews and we must leave very soon. If the authorities find that there is someone with Scarlet Fever a sign would be posted on the door and no one could come or go into that house. The doctor went on to say I will give you enough medication for the trip. He will be well but you must leave or you won't ever get out. We left as soon as we could.

From what I estimate my uncle's entire family was taken to Auschwitz about two weeks after we left for America. They all perished. At times, as I reflect on those months we spent in Pilis an over-powering sensation comes over me. I can hear our voices back in time, sitting there, whispering and hiding our fears about what might be next to come. They, along with many other relatives were taken to concentration camps where they all perished.

Today as an adult I am seeing the same shadows around the world that were present in my youth. World leaders do not seem to trust one another. It seems to me that we are heading into dangerous situations again around the world. I want to share my thoughts and fears with the youth of today.

The shadow of fear and distrust has returned and I see people acting against each other because of different beliefs. There seems little compromise, tolerance, or understanding. We can live side by side and allow for differences. The mighty dollar and greed have come to the front and unless the masses come forth and demand better morals and behavior we will all lose in the long run.

I needed to write about my aunt and uncle as well as the many people who made it possible for us to leave from harms way. And I needed to become a witness that these people lived. We need to continue to teach the future generations about our lives during the Nazi regime- when my birth city, Satoraljaujhely, became a city with no Jews- "Judenfrei" cleansed of Jews.

A Shadow from the Past: A Moment of Fear

There are incidents that will remain with a person for life; visions that remain as vivid as the moment they occurred. In 1939, I was twelve years old. Elizabeth and I are in Budapest again to get any new information about our Americans visas. We were in constant touch with the Cunard Ship Lines in Budapest because our parents were in touch with them in their American offices.

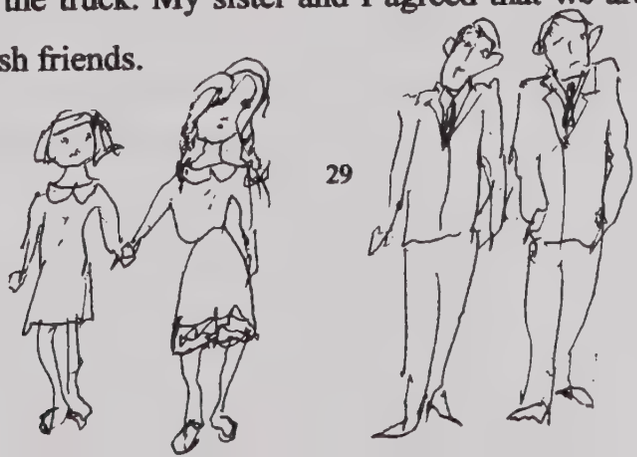
We had not received a letter from our parents because the mail service was stopped. As a result, all of our news was through the Cunard Lines.

Elizabeth and I are walking on busy street. It is a cold, gray day. My coat collar is turned up against the cold. We walk slowly as not to attract attention to ourselves. We try to blend into the way other people are behaving.

We are almost at our destination as I pick my head up little to see two men walking toward us. I keep my head straight because I feel the eyes of the man closest to me are upon me. All of a sudden, I realize who this man is and he is saying something to me with his eyes. "Don't look at me. Don't acknowledge me," his eyes implore. I make eye contact with him and quickly look away almost holding my breath.

We continue walking and I start pulling my sister's coat sleeve. She turns to me and says, "What's the matter?" in an anxious tone. I am almost in tears as I ask her, "Didn't you see Ferenc? He just passed by and said to me with his eyes not to recognize him or say anything because he was with another man."

My sister shakes her head and says, "No, I didn't see him." Then I remember that my sister is near sighted and cannot see clearly without her glasses. I remind her of the police detective who was our family friend. I asked her if she remembered the day when Teddy, our brother, was coming home from Jewish school and a youth gang picked him up and put him in the truck to take him away like so many others that had disappeared. Once I reminded her of that day she was able to recall that it was the man we had just passed who took Teddy off the truck. My sister and I agreed that we are fortunate that we had some good non-Jewish friends.



The Night of Our Departure- Agony and Tears

Our suitcases were lined up like soldiers waiting in the hall for someone to pick them and take them away. Finally the day arrived and all of us, suitcases in hand, to the railroad station, giving final kisses and hugs to people we left behind.

The goodbyes at the house were very sad. Even though we were all so young, we sensed that most likely this was goodbye forever. We walked to the train station in silence knowing this would be our final goodbye.

A snowstorm was beginning the day we left Pilis for Genoa. As we arrived at the train station, the storm was raging. People milled about the platform, anxious and unsure if the train would leave. Everyone there was fleeing Hungary. They were intent on reaching a port, a ship or some safe haven. There was concern that the train would get stranded. After some negotiation and possibly an exchange of money, the engineer with great effort from the railroad men got the train moving.

As the train chugged along heading toward Yugoslavia and Italy the skies were grey and the snow stuck to the windows. The train sped along the tracks. The churning wheels seemed to say, "Bye, bye....bye, bye." We sat in a small compartment, two benches facing each other. Teddy was stretched out on the bench and Elizabeth was holding Gabrielle on the other. I sat cold and anxiously wondering if we would ever get to our destination on time. I sat lost in thought as I felt a shadow cross over the compartment. I turned to face the doorway. I saw a huge man in a uniform, a plumed hat on his head, and a rifle with a bayonet slung over his shoulder. I see that he is Czech.

In this foreign tongue he asked for our traveling papers. While Elizabeth fumbled through her bag for our papers, I looked at her face across the aisle and saw the haunted look in her eyes. She looked over at me and our eyes met. I felt like reaching across to touch her hand and say, "Don't be afraid. We made it this far, we will make it all the way to join our parents."

The border guard took the rifle off his shoulder and with the bayonet popped the suitcases open, scattering the contents on the compartment floor. I shivered as he read our papers. They were marked "J" for Jewish. I sat crouched in the corner of the bench, my eyes straight ahead so as not to look at him. If I looked at him I knew I would cry. Time stood still until I saw the huge shadow of the man in the doorway disappear.

After a tiring trip we arrived in Genoa with a reservation in a hotel. My sister Elizabeth checked us in and went to register us on the ship that would be sailing that afternoon. The registrar informs her that we can not board the ship because we are all minors and we need a guardian. As far as we know, this is the last ship able to leave Europe.

I am back at the hotel getting more and more anxious as the hours are ticking by and Elizabeth is not back at the hotel. My imagination starts off that Elizabeth got lost or that something happened to her as she only spoke Hungarian and very little English. I am frantic but do not want to share this with the two younger siblings. I feed us and take the children to the lobby. I look out the door and see that it is getting dark when just as I am ready to return to the room Elizabeth walks into the lobby. She looks frozen and is anxious to get our bags together and leave immediately.

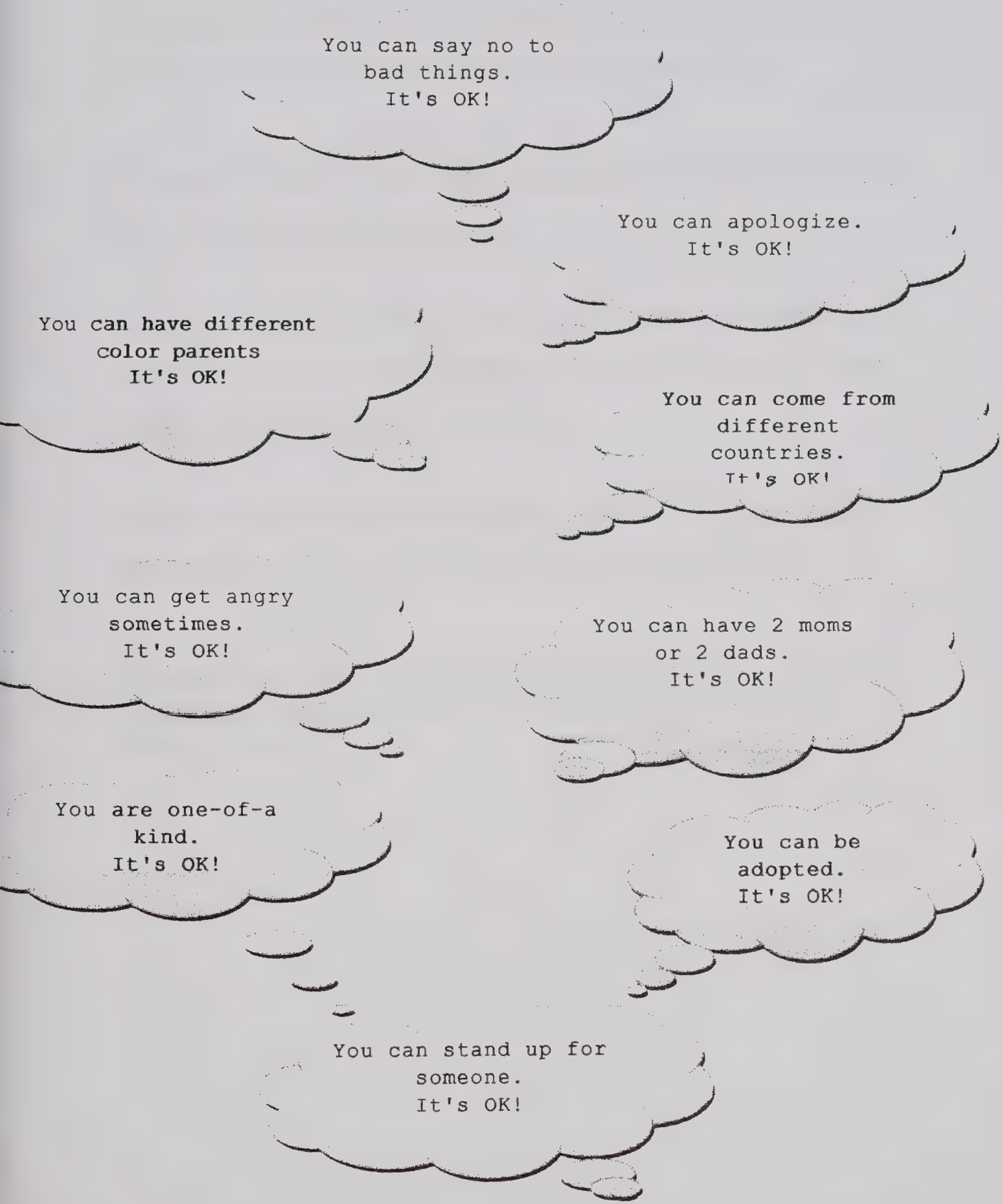
Later she tells me the story of what a miracle took place when she was almost in tears after walking up and down the pier of the ship port asking everyone going towards the ship for their help. She explains that we need nothing more than a signature. She had no luck as everyone shook their head and walked on by. Then the stream of people slowed and she sees this young couple coming towards her. For whatever reason my sister said something to them in Hungarian; they stopped and answered her. This young couple saw Elizabeth, by now, was exhausted, cold and frightened. She was afraid that she and the children would miss the ship and it would leave without us. The young couple took my sister's hand, walked up to the ship's office, signed the needed papers and told her to hurry back to get us.

We did see the couple a few times during the twelve days of the cold crossing, but we did not bother them at all. A couple of months after our arrival my mother was able to trace the couple. They also settled in Cleveland, Ohio. We all went to meet them in order to say a heartfelt thank you for the life saving act they performed for us.

We docked in New York in the evening and as I looked toward the shore I saw this huge entity coming out of the water with light shining on it. I did not find out what it was until much later; the statue of Liberty, with arms outstretched welcoming us to freedom.

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

It's OK To Be Different!


You can say no to bad things. It's OK!
You can apologize. It's OK!
You can have different color parents It's OK!
You can come from different countries. It's OK!
You can get angry sometimes. It's OK!
You can have 2 moms or 2 dads. It's OK!
You are one-of-a kind. It's OK!
You can be adopted. It's OK!
You can stand up for someone. It's OK!

What If There Was No Prejudice And Hate?

We would think about the other person and how we could be open and accept them where ever they come from

We would be aware of our body language and tone of our voice so as to not appear to judge someone

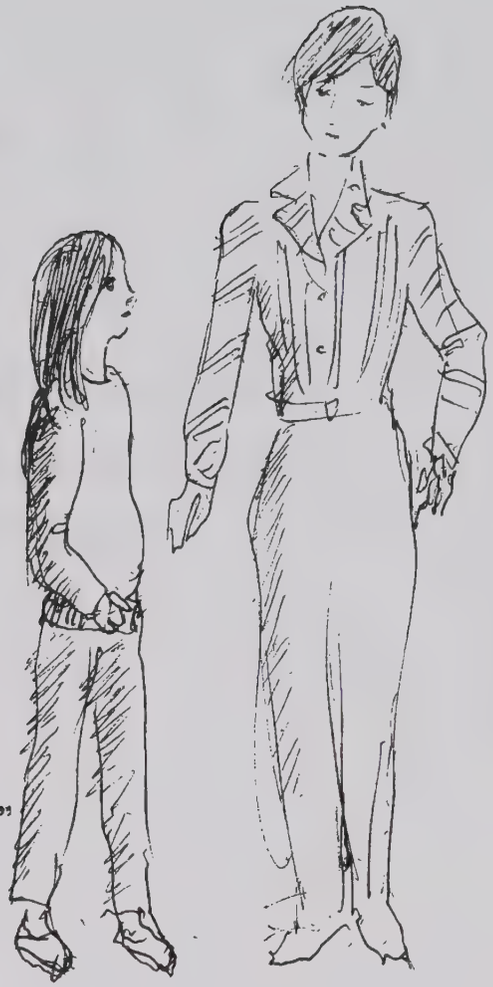
We sometimes are jealous of people and we lash out. Do we not need to realize how we hurt others by not being sensitive of their feelings and surroundings or situation?

We need to stick up for friends when you see that they are being harassed because they are different from someone else

The delusion that personal gain is made by crushing others and attempting to compel others to believe and live as we do is a mistake. Cicero

Stand Up For Your Beliefs

A Short Story



What Happened in School Today?

Mother: "How was school today?"

Daughter: "Fine!"

Mother: "But you look upset."

Daughter: "Guess I am, really"

Mother: "Want to talk about it?"

Daughter: Sheila and I had a big fight over how she treated Juan."

Mother: "Are you afraid to talk to her now?"

Daughter: "If I told her how I feel I may lose her friendship"

Mother: "Sometimes I feel that you don't really know
how you feel about the things you value."

Daughter: "You are right; and I am always comparing myself to my friends:
how they act and what they do. I want to be just like them, but…"

Mother: "If you are not comfortable with a friend it's not friendship."

Teens will compromise their beliefs many times even if they really don't agree with a friend's beliefs, for the sake of friendship. They agree on issues just to show their friends that they are not smarter than their friends. If you want to succeed in life you must look beyond the friendships that stifle your strengths and creativity.

Don't be afraid to tell the truth. You've got to stand up for your ideas because you can't always please everyone. You can be a leader by taking risks, not by agreeing with everyone. If you see some of your friends harassing others because of race or religion- be ready to verbally step in. Don't just take someone's opinions. Become a critical thinker yourself. Always respect others' beliefs or practices even if they are not yours.

Can We Make a Difference?

Yes We Can!

We can accept people of all color, religion, or nationality for the kind of person they are; not their color, size, religion, or other attributes. We need to demonstrate our kindness and consideration of others.

Prejudice

People should respect each other

Read about different cultures before judging

Encourage others to learn not to hate

Jews have been a scapegoat when there are problems in the world

Unite and wipe out hate

Don't be afraid to speak out

I will do my part to make this a better world

Can I make a difference? Yes I can!

Energy and courage are required to stand up for others who are harassed because they are different

Hate Has Not Stopped

I am still scared. Will I ever stop being scared?
Prejudice and hatred are on the rise again.
How can we set an example for people to follow? Can we show the world it can be done?
Jewish cemeteries and holocaust memorials were defaced with Swastikas in Argentina, France, Greece, Scotland, Sweden, and the Ukraine. Hatred is not limited to continents or countries distant to our shores as this also took place in the United States.

Hope for a New World

I would like to be more optimistic about the future of the Jews and all mankind.

The world remained silent while 11million people were killed because They were different: 6 million Jews, 5 million political outcasts: Roma, homosexuals and the mentally ill.

Why am I in America? Because the prejudice was overt in Europe. I see the shadow of prejudice coming again all over the world. When people can denigrate others freely we must take steps to stop it.

Mark Twain once said, " Everything is mortal but the Jew."

"Do not stand idly by."

"Silence is deadly."

"Tolerance for all people of the world."

"We must take stock. Where are we going?"

"It is incumbent upon us to praise God who has formed all creation to repair the World to bring us nearer to the day that the World will be one"

~ Aleinu Prayer

Epilogue

A number of years ago my Canadian friend, Betty, decided to tour Italy. We have travelled together for years to different parts of the world prior to this trip. Why we picked Italy I do not remember but I know that the stop in Genoa was not on my mind when we decided on this trip.

We were to travel to the first stop alone since we were arriving from different countries. I arrived in Genoa, checked in to the hotel, and decided to take a walk and I ended up standing on the dock from which I shipped out so many, many years ago.

Now it is over sixty years later and I am standing on the same dock from which we left for America. I look out as the water splashes against the dock remembering that overcast February day in 1940, with snow on the ground and the sky so gray that I know it is going to snow again. I have the flash back to that uncertain time in my life and shiver. I made it out of harms way and once again I am standing on the shores as an elder woman reflecting on those turbulent times.

I see the dark shadows again. People are restless, they are rude to one another, and violence is escalating. Our politicians are encouraging the people at gatherings to behave riotously against others if they do not agree on political issues.

We are not represented properly by our elected officials who are chosen by the people in each state to meet the needs of the people they represent. I do not want to see a world like the one I saw in my early life, for me, my grandchildren, and other grandchildren. We must return to decency to achieve harmony and fairness to the people of this wonderful country, America that has given hope to the many immigrants throughout the years.

On January 27, 1998, Yehuda Bauer, academic advisor to Yad Vashem and an historian wrote in one of his books, "rethinking the Holocaust". He presented to the Bundestag, the German House of Representatives from his book the following:

"We Germans and Jews depend on each other in undertaking this responsibility. You can not carry out the task of remembering without us, and we must be sure that here, where the disaster arose, a new human, better civilization is being constructed on the ruins of the past. Together we carry a very special responsibility towards the whole of humanity."

"You, your children and your children's children shall never become perpetrators."

"Your children and your children's children shall never, ever allow yourselves to be victims."

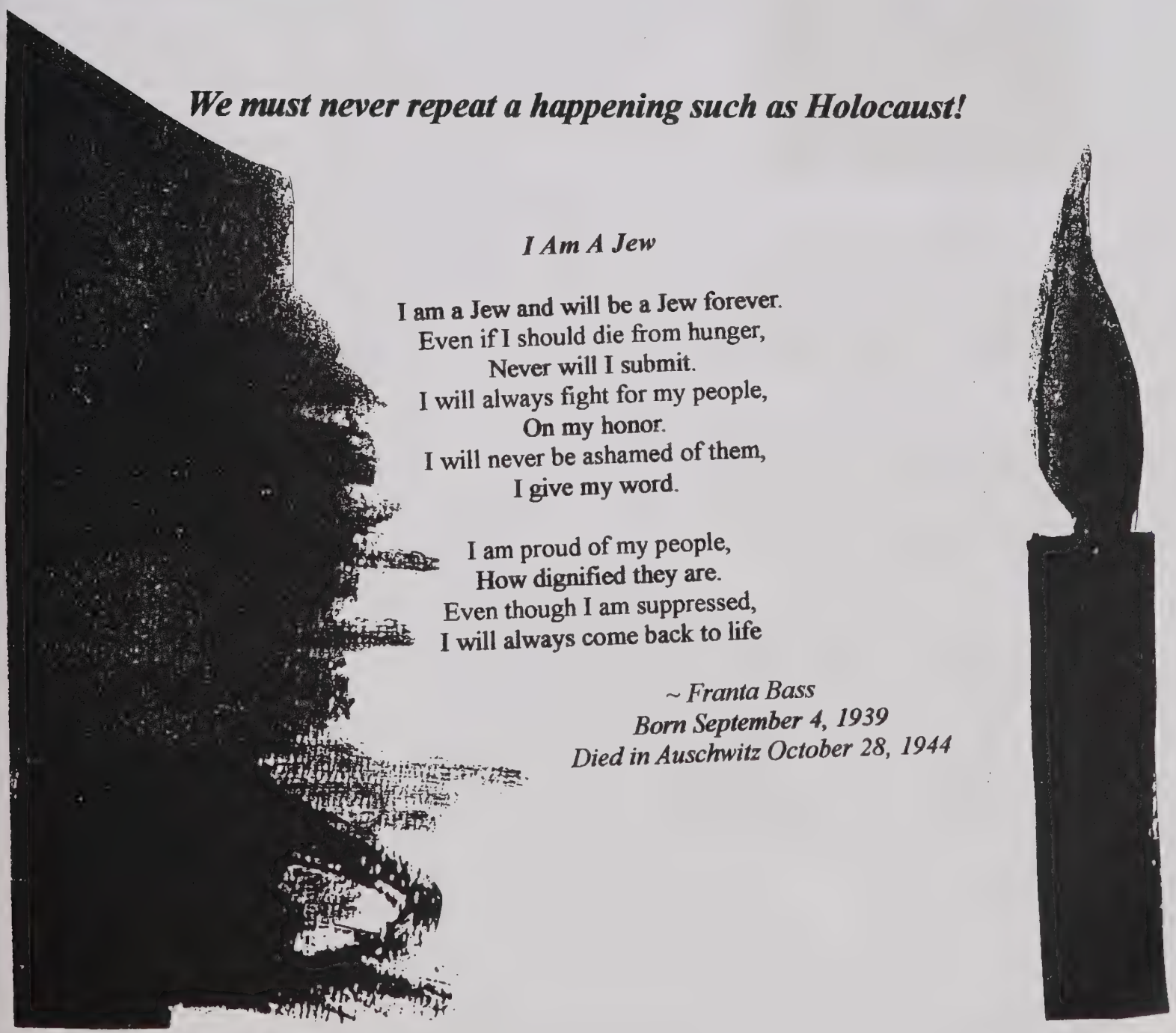
"Your children and your children's children shall never, never be passive onlookers to mass murder, genocide, or (may it never be repeated) a Holocaust like tragedy."

~ Yehuda Bauer from: *Rethinking the Holocaust*

Children of the War

- ✡ The concentration camp called Theresienstadt was located just outside of Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- ✡ Fifteen Thousand children passed through Theresienstadt during World War II between 1940-1945. Less than 100 survived.
- ✡ After the war, metal tubes were found underground at the camp. Inside the tubes a 1000 drawings were found drawn by the children while in the camp.
- ✡ Later, a book was published called "I never saw another butterfly"

We must never repeat a happening such as Holocaust!



I Am A Jew

I am a Jew and will be a Jew forever.
Even if I should die from hunger,
Never will I submit.
I will always fight for my people,
On my honor.
I will never be ashamed of them,
I give my word.

I am proud of my people,
How dignified they are.
Even though I am suppressed,
I will always come back to life

~ Franta Bass
Born September 4, 1939
Died in Auschwitz October 28, 1944

Children Who Did Not Survive Terezinstadt

Fear

Today the ghetto knows a difference fear,
Close in its grip, death wields an icy scythe.
An evil sickness spreads a terror in its wake,

The victims of its shadow weep and writhe.
Today a father's heartbeat tells his fright
And mothers bend their heads into their hands.
Now children choke and die with typhus her,
A bitter tax is taken from their bands.

My heart still beats inside my breast
While friends depart for other worlds.
Perhaps it's better- who can say?
Than watching this, to die today?

No, no, my God, we want to live!
Not watch our numbers melt away.
We want to have a better world,
We want to work- we must not die!

~ Eva Pickova, 12 years old, Nymburk

Night in the Ghetto

Another day has gone for keeps
Into the bottomless pit of time.
Again it has wounded a man, help captive
By his brethren.

After dusk, he longs for bandages,
For soft hands to shield the eyes
From all the horrors that stare by day.
But in the ghetto, darkness, too, is kind
To weary eyes that all day long
Have had to watch.

Dawn crawls again along the ghetto streets
Embracing all who walk this way.
Only a car like a greeting from a long-gone world
Gobbles up the dark with fiery eyes
That sweet darkness that falls upon the soul
And heals those wounds illumined by the day...
Along the streets come light and ranks of people
Like a long black ribbon, loomed with gold.

~1943 Anonymous

Tears

And thereafter come...
Tears,
Without them
There is no life.
Tears,
Inspired by grief
Tears,
That fall like rain.

~Alena Synkova

The Garden

A little garden,
Fragrant and full of roses.
The path is narrow
And a little boy walks along it.

A little boy, a sweet boy,
Like that growing blossom.
When the blossom comes to bloom,
The little boy will be no more.

~ Franta Bass

Homesick

I've lived in the ghetto here for more than a year,
In Terezin, in the black town now,
And when I remember my old home so dear,
I can love it more than I did, somehow.

Ah, home, home,
Why did they tear me away?
Here the weak die easy as a feather
And when they die, they die forever.

I'd like to go back home again,
It makes me think of sweet spring flowers.
Before, when I used to live at home,
It never seemed so dear and fair.

I remember now those golden days...
But maybe I'll be going there soon again.

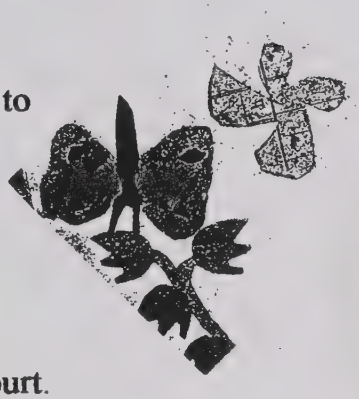
People walk along the street,
You see at once on each you meet
That there's ghetto here.
A place of evil and of fear.
There's little to eat and much to want,
Where bit by bit, it's horror to live.
But no one must give up!
The world turns and times change.

Yet we all hope the time will come
When we'll go home again.
Now I know how dear it is
And often I remember it.

The Butterfly

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
Against a white stone...

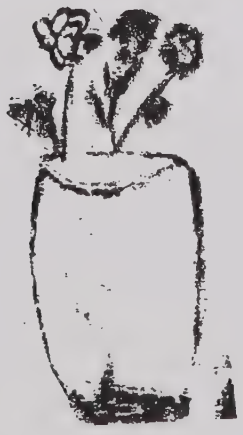
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
Kiss the world good-bye.



For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found what I love here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.

~ Pavel Friedmann
Died in Auschwitz September 24, 1944



I'd Like To Go Alone

I'd like to go alone
Where there are other, nicer people,
Somewhere into the far unknown,
There, where no one kills another.

Maybe more of us,
A thousand strong,
Will reach this goal
Before too long.

~ Alena Synkova

Campfire (To Eva Landova)

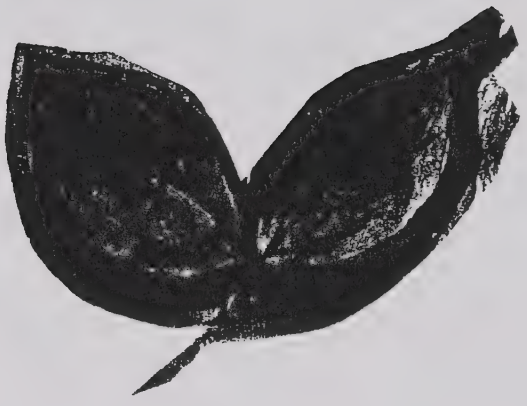
Here I sit on a rock
In front of the campfire.
One branch after another
Is snatched by the fire.
Into the darkness
The forest recedes.

Fire makes one reflect...
Terezin is all I think about.
But now memories gather around me
Like the falling leaves.

Fall is here.
The leaves turn yellow on the trees,
The campfire dies out.
My thoughts are far from here,
Somewhere far,
Where integrity lives.

It lives in my friend.
Now I think of her.
Memories gather around me
Like the falling leaves.

~ A. Lindtova
Died in Auschwitz October 28, 1944



Birdsong

He doesn't know the world at all
Who stays in his nest and doesn't go out.
He doesn't know what birds know best
Not what I want to sing about,
That the world is full of loveliness.

When dewdrops sparkle in the grass
And earth's aflood with morning light,
A blackbird sings upon a bush
To greet the dawning after night.
Then I know how fine it is to live.

Hey try to open up your heart
To beauty; go to the woods someday
And weave a wreath of memories there.
Then if the tears obscure your way
You will know how wonderful is it to be alive.

~ Anonymous

Hangman by Maurice Ogden

Into our town the Hangman came,
Smelling of gold and blood and flame.
And he paced our bricks with a diffident air,
And built his frame in the courthouse square.

The scaffold stood by the courthouse side,
Only as wide as the door was wide;
A frame as tall, or little more,
Than the capping sill of the courthouse door.

And we wondered, whenever we had the time,
Who the criminal, what the crime
That the Hangman judged with the yellow twist
of knotted hemp in his busy fist.

And innocent though we were, with dread,
We passed those eyes of buckshot lead --
Till one cried: "Hangman, who is he
For whom you raised the gallows-tree?"

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye,
And he gave us a riddle instead of reply:
"He who serves me best," said he,
"Shall earn the rope of the gallows-tree."

And he stepped down, and laid his hand
On a man who came from another land.
And we breathed again, for another's grief
At the Hangman's hand was our relief

And the gallows-frame on the courthouse lawn
By tomorrow's sun would be struck and gone.
So we gave him way, and no one spoke,
Out of respect for his Hangman's cloak.

The next day's sun looked mildly down
On roof and street in our quiet town,
And stark and black in the morning air
Was the gallows-tree in the courthouse square.

And the Hangman stood at his usual stand
With the yellow hemp in his busy hand;
With his buckshot eye and his jaw like a pike
And his air so knowing and business-like.

And we cried, "Hangman, have you not done
Yesterday, with the foreign one?"

Then we fell silent, and stood amazed,
"Oh, not for him was the gallows raised."
He laughed a laugh as he looked at us:
"Did you think I'd gone to all this fuss

To hang one man? That's a thing I do
To stretch a rope when the rope is new."

Then one cried "Murder!" and one cried "Shame!"
And into our midst the Hangman came
To that man's place. "Do you hold," said he,
"with him that was meant for the gallows-tree?"

And he laid his hand on that one's arm.
And we shrank back in quick alarm!
And we gave him way, and no one spoke
Out of fear of his Hangman's cloak.

That night we saw with dread surprise
The Hangman's scaffold had grown in size.
Fed by the blood beneath the chute,
The gallows-tree had taken root;

Now as wide, or a little more,
Than the steps that led to the courthouse door,
As tall as the writing, or nearly as tall,
Halfway up on the courthouse wall.

The third he took -- we had all heard tell --
Was a usurer, and an infidel.
"What," said the Hangman "have you to do
With the gallows-bound, and he a Jew?"

And we cried out, "Is this one he
Who has served you well and faithfully?"
The Hangman smiled: "It's a clever scheme
to try the strength of the gallows-beam."

The fourth man's dark, accusing song
Had scratched our comfort hard and long;
"And what concern," he gave us back.
"Have you for the doomed -- the doomed and Black?"

The fifth. The sixth. And we cried again,
"Hangman, Hangman, is this the man?"
"It's a trick," he said. "that we hangmen know
For easing the trap when the trap springs slow."

And so we ceased, and asked no more,
As the Hangman tallied his bloody score.
And sun by sun, and night by night,
The gallows grew to monstrous height.

The wings of the scaffold opened wide
Till they covered the square from side to side;
And the monster cross-beam, looking down,
Cast its shadow across the town.

Then through the town the Hangman came,
Through the empty streets, and called my name --
And I looked at the gallows soaring tall,
And thought, "There is no one left at all

For hanging, and so he calls to me
To help pull down the gallows-tree."
So I went out with right good hope
To the Hangman's tree and the Hangman's rope.

He smiled at me as I came down
To the courthouse square through the silent town.
And supple and stretched in his busy hand
Was the yellow twist of the hempen strand.

And he whistled his tune as he tried the trap,
And it sprang down with a ready snap --
And then with a smile of awful command
He laid his hand upon my hand.

"You tricked me. Hangman!," I shouted then,
"That your scaffold was built for other men...
And I no henchman of yours," I cried,
"You lied to me, Hangman. Foully lied!"

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye,
"Lied to you? Tricked you?" he said. "Not I.
For I answered straight and I told you true --
The scaffold was raised for none but you.

For who has served me more faithfully
Then you with your coward's hope?" said he,
"And where are the others who might have stood
Side by your side in the common good?"

"Dead," I whispered. And amiably
"Murdered," the Hangman corrected me:
"First the foreigner, then the Jew...
I did no more than you let me do."

Beneath the beam that blocked the sky
None had stood so alone as I.
The Hangman noosed me, and no voice there
Cried "Stop!" for me in the empty square.